

Philippians

Bible Commentary 2021

by

Mike Kines

A Prisoner Of Jesus Christ – Philippians 1

1:1-2

Paul included Timothy in his greeting to the Philippians. Paul did not consider himself a lone worker in ministry. He worked with others to spread the gospel. He called himself and Timothy "servants of Jesus Christ". This could be translated "slaves" of Jesus Christ. We are a slave to sin which leads to death or we are slaves of the Lord Jesus Christ. No matter what we choose men are created as servants and will serve one or the other. Men worship themselves or they worship God.

He greeted the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi and extended this greeting to the "bishops and deacons". There were "saints" in the church and there were people with the responsibility of watching over the church. The bishops and deacons were provided to guide, watch, and organize the business of the church.

Paul extended grace and peace to this church. This was a common greeting from Paul in his letters. Grace was a Greek word and peace a Jewish word. This is appropriate for the church which is made up of both Jews and Gentiles in one new house of faith. The church is the body of Jesus Christ and is composed of both Jew and Gentile believers.

This grace and peace comes from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is God and the Father is God. We have a problem if we reject the triune nature of God. If we reject that God is three in one then we eventually reject that Jesus Christ is God. Jesus Christ is both fully God and fully man. We must have both in order for the gospel to save us.

1:3-7

Paul started his letter by saying he prayed for them. This was encouraging to know someone prayed for them. We should remember Jesus prays for us. The Bible says that Jesus "*ever lives to make intercession for us*". He is our high priest forever.

Paul thanked God when he remembered them. We need to be thankful for Christians we know. The Christians we have known in our past should inspire thanksgiving. Can you remember the Christians in your life who influenced you to come to faith in Jesus? I do! I remember most of their names and faces.

I thank God for them. I thank God for the Christians he used to turn me from destroying myself. He turned me toward himself by using faithful Christians.

When we pray for others it brings joy to our heart. When I think of Christians in my life, those who inspired me to know the Lord, it brings joy to me thinking about them. I should think about them more often. Let's remember to give thanks for our brothers and sisters in Christ and be joyful when we hear good news about them.

They were partners with Paul in ministry. He said they were part of his fellowship in the gospel. They supported him from the early days of ministry. Because of his relationship with them he could confidently say that God who started a good work in them would carry that good work to completion. That completion for all of us will come when Jesus Christ returns for the church. I believe that day is not far off when the church will be raptured. We will be caught up to meet the Lord and so shall we ever be with the Lord forever! Amen.

Paul had them in his heart. It did not matter what his circumstances were. At that time he was a prisoner of Rome but he considered himself a prisoner of the Lord. No matter where he was Paul preached the gospel. Most of what we have from Paul's ministry are his letters. He wrote to churches from prison. Paul told the Philippians they were partners with him in the gospel.

Anytime we help support a ministry we take part in that ministry. We also receive rewards with those we support. If we work together with them we are part of that ministry. We receive a reward along with them.

How can we be part of a ministry? Start by being thankful for brothers and sisters in Christ. Start by praying and thanking God for them. This changes our attitude toward others and when opportunities arise we can seize it.

1:8-11

People are confused about the word "love". Today people assign the word "love" a meaning as far from the Bible as one can get. Paul taught "love" should abound "in knowledge and in all judgment". This means biblical love exists in the context of truth. Love is in the context of purity and holiness.

Jesus said the world will know we are Christians by our love for one another. But what kind of love is this? Certainly he did not mean sexual love. I don't think he meant familiar or brotherly love. Jesus meant that the world would know we are Christians because we lay down our life for others. We give our lives to help people. We are not self-centered or selfish people. We are focused on the needs of others. We do not put ourselves first. We are not self-worshippers. Instead, we love God and we love one another.

This love is not always an emotion. There may be times of emotion but biblical love is commitment. It is an act of one's will to put other people before ourselves. This love involves the will and involves the mind. This love requires the power of God to be active in us.

People may help someone for selfish reasons. Sometimes people help others because they need to feel important. They give and it appears they love people. Behind the giving, however, is a motive of self-

love. They want to be recognized. They want people to follow them and do what they say. This is worldly love.

As we grow in the truth we will discern selfish "love". Don't give with a motive of receiving back. Lay down your life for Christ. We offer ourselves to God because we love the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus asked Peter, "Do you love me?" He asked him three times; one time for each denial. Peter replied, "Lord, you know I love you." Prove that you love God by growing in biblical love.

1:12-18

Paul said his imprisonment helped further the gospel. This reminds me of **Romans 8:28**. All things work together for the good of those who love God! Paul understood that despite his suffering the gospel was advanced through his testimony. He noticed everyone in the palace knew who he was. Everyone knew he was a Christian and his imprisonment was for preaching the gospel.

As a result others were encouraged to preach the gospel. Why? Did they want to get locked up as well? They loved Paul and when they saw his courage it inspired them to pick up the torch. It is persecution against Christians which lights the fire of revival.

Paul knew that not everyone in ministry had good motives. He knew some about him and wished him harm. They hated the gospel and Paul. Instead of directly attacking the church they joined the church and worked from the inside to destroy it. Paul saw this and knew God was in control. It did not matter if the person was for or against him. This is true in our lives. No matter if a person is for or against us God can use them to further his plan for our lives.

Paul was satisfied to know the gospel of Jesus Christ was preached. People talked about Jesus Christ. That is all that mattered to Paul.

1:19-26

Paul saw the possibility that he could die as a prisoner. No doubt he knew the story of John the Baptist and how he was martyred. There were Christians losing their life during this time in the early church. Paul's attitude was that for him to die would be better. He knew if he died he would be with the Lord which was much better than life in the body. However, he also realized that for him to continue living in the body would benefit the Philippians. He was torn between the two options. He had a desire to depart and be with the Lord but he knew he would stay so he could continue to help them.

Paul's desire was that by life or death Christ would be magnified in him. This is the goal of every Christian. Our intense goal is that our life bring glory to God. Pray our life will honor and glorify the Lord Jesus Christ. Pray our living and dying will honor and glorify God.

In this passage Paul had no fear of death. This is the attitude of the Christian. Why should we fear death? The Lord Jesus Christ was raised from the dead. The resurrection of the Lord Jesus is the heart and foundation of our faith. How can a Christian believe in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus and still be afraid to die? We should never fear death. For the Christian it will be like going to sleep and waking up from a dream. This current life will be like a dream when we wake up in the real world, which is the presence of God in heaven. That is the real world we are living for. We are not living for this temporary

existence on earth. Our true home is the New Jerusalem. Hallelujah, and we will get there one day. By faith we put one foot in front of the next and trust that Jesus will carry on to completion the good work he started in us.

1:27-30

Paul taught that suffering is part of the Christian's life. We learn suffering is a normal part of the Christian life. It was given to us to suffer in behalf of Christ. We not only believe in Jesus but we also suffer for his sake. What does this mean?

For a Christian to live in this world system means suffering. The goal of the Christian contradicts everything the world system stands for. The Christian faces opposition from unbelievers in every direction. He will be surrounded by people who are in opposition to him. There will be suffering. In some parts of the world this opposition means martyrdom. In other places it might mean loss of opportunities or discrimination.

Suffering is not something to run from. God has a purpose in allowing the Christian to suffer. It helps conform us to the image of the Lord Jesus Christ. It helps us cling to faith in the Lord Jesus. It can be a witness to the world and lead others to faith in Jesus. It has been said that martyrdom is the seed of the church. The more Christians are persecuted the stronger the church becomes.

Paul suffered for preaching the gospel. Do we think we are better than the apostle Paul? The Lord Jesus suffered. Are we better than him? No, we are no better than the Lord Jesus or the apostle Paul. We can expect if we are living for the Lord we will suffer the consequences. But the end result is heaven and our eternal reward.

Working Out Salvation – Philippians 2

2:1-4

The key to unity in the church is humility and putting others first. Paul asked the Philippians to unite in the same Spirit so he could rejoice in them. There is real cause for Christians to rejoice in the unity of fellowship. We can rejoice when we are united because the church is more effective as a witness to the world when we are united.

I'm convinced what we have with denominations is caused by men controlled by pride. Men are followers of men's names or men's teachings. Those who disagree with a big name theologian create their own group of Christians. The result is splintering Christians into camps who debate one another. Some even believe the purpose of church is debating systems of theology. I've met people who believed in systematic theology more than they believed in Jesus.

We must maintain humility and put the needs of other people before ourselves. This takes being a broken person. Humility does not come natural to the human heart. We are born thinking the world revolves around us and that nobody else matters. Paul gives us the greatest example of humility and that is the Lord Jesus Christ.

2:5-11

Paul described the attitude of the Lord Jesus. When he did this he immediately exhorted Christians to be exactly like the Lord Jesus Christ in this attitude. What is the description of the Lord Jesus that Paul gave us? The one word which summarizes this description of the Lord Jesus is "humility".

Our attitude should be humility and serving others. Jesus is God. When he came to the earth as a man he temporarily laid aside his power as God and became a man. As a man he relied on the Heavenly Father and the Holy Spirit to guide, direct, and give him spiritual power. He showed us how to live as a man in a right relationship with God.

He showed us how to defeat Satan. How did he defeat Satan? He defeated Satan by humility and being a servant. He made himself of no reputation. He did not exalt himself. Instead he exalted God the Father. He said whatever he did was because he saw his Father do it. He only spoke what the Father spoke. He only did what he saw his Father do. This is how we know that one of the basic qualities of God is humility. How can this be? How can the Creator of the entire universe be humble? And yet he is. We see the humility of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

To be like God is to walk in humility and have the attitude of a servant. This is what the Lord is like. This is what God is like. When we exalt self and control people through deceit or manipulation then we act like the devil. However, when we serve in humility we walk in the Spirit and live out the example of the Lord Jesus Christ.

God the Father exalted the Lord Jesus Christ. His name is greater than any other name. He humbled himself and died on the cross. God now has exalted him above all things. At the name of Jesus Christ every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth. Every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

A day will come when even the devil will bow his knee and confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. But then it will be too late for him and too late for those who followed him. Their future is the lake of fire.

It is important to humble ourselves right now. Repent of self, sin, the world, and the devil. Turn to God with all our heart and believe the gospel. Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again on the third day.

2:12-13

Working out salvation does not mean working for salvation. Salvation was accomplished when Christ died for our sin on the cross. Jesus died on the cross, was buried, and rose again on the third day. This was complete salvation. There is nothing we can add or take away from what the Lord Jesus accomplished through his death, burial, and resurrection.

Working out salvation means we discover for ourselves in daily living how real the Lord Jesus is. The gospel impacts our daily living in many ways. We received a new heart and a new life when we were born again by the Holy Spirit. This new life changes our goal. We are no longer self-centered. We no longer worship self and live for self. Now we live for him who died for us and rose again. It is a life based on a different principle than what the world system understands.

Those who do not believe the gospel live by the lie of Satan that we are gods. We are the masters of our lives. This is a complete lie. Man was not made in his own image. We were made in the image of God. We were created to reflect our Creator.

Working out salvation means we learn daily how to live in a fallen world as someone who belongs to another world. We learn to humble ourselves. We learn to serve others. We learn to put others before ourselves. This is what it means to work out salvation. We learn how to apply the eternal truth of God's word to our everyday life situations.

The Holy Spirit lives in us and he teaches us to deny ourselves. He teaches us to walk in light within a dark world. He teaches us to engage the world system not on the basis of the world's rules but on the basis of God's kingdom. We are in the world but we are certainly not of this world or a part of this present world system. Our life is in Christ Jesus our Lord and we live out his life continually each day. As we do this others who are called to eternal life will be drawn to us. We will have opportunities to teach others what the Lord Jesus taught us. We will have opportunities to give what the Lord gave us.

2:14-16

Paul's heart was set on the "day of Christ". His goal was to rejoice when the Lord Jesus returned and set up his kingdom. What is the one thing that will give joy when Jesus Christ returns? Our greatest joy will be when we see people that God used us to bring into his kingdom. Our greatest happiness will be the same as what makes the Lord happy. Think about it. The Bible says when Jesus went to the cross that he endured it because of the joy set before him. What was that joy? It was knowing that through his death, burial, and resurrection he would bring many people into God's kingdom. He was making a way for many people to escape the condemnation and judgment of Satan and this fallen world.

This is the Christian's highest happiness. To see someone we prayed for, someone we witnessed to, someone we built a friendship with come to the Lord Jesus Christ.

How can we influence people to come to the Lord Jesus Christ? Paul made it simple and easy for anyone to understand. He told Christians to stop complaining. Stop murmuring! Stop disputing! If we would just do this then we could see people come to Christ and be saved. If our lives reflect an attitude of praise, thanksgiving, and humility we will draw people to the Lord Jesus Christ.

When Christians complain it gives unbelievers reason to find fault. They have a reason to rebuke us. Paul said that we should never complain, murmur, or dispute, so that our lives will shine as bright as a star in the night sky.

Only when our lives are salt and light can we truly proclaim the gospel and it will have power to convict the conscience and bring salvation.

2:17-23

Paul mentioned his son Timothy. His words show he cared for and loved Timothy. He said that he had no one who was as like-minded. Timothy was Paul's son like Joshua was Moses' son. They were men who moved in the same spirit as their leader.

Paul made an interesting observation. He said "all seek their own and not the things which are Jesus Christ's". What did this mean? It meant that the natural man always puts self first. Those who do not live for Christ will automatically live for self first. This is man's natural inclination. Man is a natural self-worshiper. Idolatry flows from the heart of a man who does not believe in the Most High God.

The only way to be delivered from a self-centered life is to live for Jesus Christ. When we seek first God's kingdom and his righteousness we find out the Lord takes care of us. He becomes our provision and protection. He is our provider and protector. We do not need to be concerned with living for self. Instead, we deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Jesus Christ. The Lord himself is our portion.

The Spirit filled life is not lived for self. Instead, we put the interest of Jesus Christ above our own interest. The Lord's interest is his people. We are called to wash the feet of the saints.

2:24-30

Why did the Holy Spirit include an example of a Christian who was sick. Obviously Ephaphroditus was a man of God and filled with faith. It was not a lack of faith that led him to being sick. It was not because he had sin in his life. The Holy Spirit said this man loved the church, he loved Paul, and he was near to death because he helped Paul when the Philippians did not.

When I read this I am reminded of the American health and wealth gospel. It is shallow false teaching. This false gospel is leaven in the bread of the church. It permeates churches because of today's information super highway. Everyone can subscribe to podcasts of false teachers. Everyone can listen and watch YouTube videos promoting false doctrines that blow through the church.

The doctrine that Christians should always have good health is a lie. It is a false doctrine. How do I know this? Because I read my Bible. Because I can read the scriptures right here in Philippians. A man of God who helped Paul was sick. Paul was not able to heal him. In the book of Acts Paul laid hands on people and they were healed by God. But here is a man who is sick and Paul cannot heal him. What does this tell us? It tells us Christians get sick. It is not because of a lack of faith or because they have sin. It is because we live in a fallen world.

I like what I heard a preacher say one time: "*nobody yet has died of good health.*" And we will all die if the Lord tarries the rapture.

Pressing On – Philippians 3

3:1-3

It is important to rejoice in the Lord! What is the alternative? Should Christians go around letting their bottom lip drag on the ground? No! I don't think Paul was telling us to pretend like we are happy either.

This is not a matter of just making yourself "be happy". There are people whose circumstances make it impossible to put on a happy face and pretend like everything is great. I don't think Paul was saying that.

This is deeper than happiness. Happiness depends on having things like we want them to be. Life will certainly not cooperate with us in making us feel happy all the time.

We can rejoice in the Lord. This is not something we do just some of the time because Paul said to rejoice in the Lord always!

What is this rejoicing? I don't think I can describe it very well. It does not depend on emotions or willpower. It is something a man of God draws on deep in his spirit. Out of the depths of the spirit there is a well of life which we can draw on. By faith we see through the Lord's eyes and when we do we are satisfied. We are satisfied even if our circumstances are falling apart. We are satisfied in the Lord Jesus.

This joy comes from abiding in the Lord. This joy comes from having the mind renewed by God's word. This joy comes when we believe God's word more than our emotions. This joy comes when we believe God's word when everything around us contradicts God's word. This joy comes when our mind automatically leaps to God's word when everyone else is spewing lies.

We can rejoice in the Lord. We can do this by faith. We can experience this. It is something the Lord wants to give every Christian.

Paul warned them to beware of three different groups of people. One group was "dogs", one group was "evil workers", and another group was "the concision".

"Dogs" in the Bible points to Gentiles or unbelievers. People who are outside "of the household of faith". Today this points to anyone not a Christian and those who are not outwardly religious. These are people who do their own thing. Why are warned about people like this? Because if you are around them you can be influenced by their spiritual apathy. You can adopt their attitude. We must never allow ourselves to adopt a passive attitude and be unwilling to make waves because of our faith.

Another group is "evil workers". These people are in the church but they do not have the Holy Spirit. They actively participate in ministry. They promote a false gospel in subtle ways. Instead of magnifying the gospel they magnify the Ten Commandments. These people talk about Jesus but they do not know him. They do not have a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus. They may know bible doctrine but they have no spiritual life. They cannot impart spiritual life to others. These people fill dead churches.

The last group is "the concision". In Paul's day these were religious people who were actively subverting the church. Some infiltrated the early church and tried to convince new believers to be circumcised in order to be true believers. Paul rebuked them in the letter to the Galatians.

If anyone tries to convince you to become a follower of the "Torah" run away from them. There are many modern day people who are of "the concision". They will try to lure you back into following Jewish rules and regulations. One of these movements that I am aware of is called the "Hebrew roots" movement. Be careful of people who change the English name "Jesus" into the Hebrew word "Yeshua" or all the other variant names like "Yahweh" or "Jehovah". These people might be setting you up to get involved into religious legalism. When people cannot use the plain word "Jesus" like we have in the English Bible they might have an agenda. To me it smells of spiritual pride and elitism.

3:4-11

There were people competing with Paul's ministry. The problem was that these people were promoting false gospels and Paul defended his gospel by pointing to the Lord Jesus Christ.

These false apostles attempted to prove their authenticity through tribal or religious pedigree. Paul laughed at this because his pedigree was better than all of them and yet he said he considered his pedigree worthless. All his past accomplishments and family background paled in comparison to knowing the Lord Jesus Christ.

Here the attitude of the world within religion is exposed. People establish authority in a lot of ways. The false apostles attempted to establish themselves by pointing to family upbringing, to titles, and to accomplishments. Paul said this is garbage compared to knowing the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul's claim to authenticity came from knowing the Lord Jesus Christ. He said he suffered the loss of all things in order that he might know the Lord Jesus more and more. He was willing to give up everything in order to know the Lord Jesus Christ.

The end result of a life of faith in Jesus is resurrection. Paul's goal was to be raised up to be with the Lord Jesus Christ. His goal was not to make a name for himself in this world. He was not trying to create something for himself. Instead, he lost everything that he might gain the Lord Jesus Christ.

Confidence in the flesh is to think like the world system. How does the world think? The world thinks a man is somebody if he has a title. The world thinks a man is somebody important if he comes from a good family and has a big name. This is how the world thinks. Paul showed us that God thinks much differently than the way men do. Read **Isaiah 55:8-9**.

3:12-14

Paul recognized he had not yet arrived. Arrival comes when we are with the Lord Jesus and inherit our resurrection body. Paul said he had not reached the goal yet. What did he do then? He continued to press forward in his relationship with the Lord. He wanted to take hold on all that Christ took hold on him for. Why did Jesus save me? Yes, it is so I can go to heaven. But what is God's purpose in saving me until I reach heaven?

In order to go forward we must let go of the past. This sounds simple, but it is difficult, at least it has been for me. Even when I know the past I'm holding to has little value. It is hard to put off the old life and continue to put on the new life which God has for us.

The only way forward is to forget the past. This is one reason why I purposely try not to be sentimental about the past. I don't look at old pictures much. I don't keep much of a journal. My journals usually just contain how-to instructions on how to fix things or some kind of tool which I may need again in the future.

I forget past failures but try to remember the lessons I learned from those failures. I forget my past successes in case I get proud. I forget failures, I forget successes. Instead, I focus my heart on the Lord Jesus Christ. I want to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I didn't realize I was struggling with regret until one day I found myself spending a lot of time imagining what I would have done different in my life if I had known as a young man what I know now. What would I do different? This is a pointless exercise. It is futile and vain to fantasize about the past. It creates inner turmoil and frustration. It shows a lack of faith in God's providence over the details of my life. I should believe the scripture which says that God causes all things to work together for the good of those who love him. (Romans 8:28).

I want to press forward and not look back. Jesus said if we put our hand to the plow and look back it makes us unfit for God's kingdom. So I don't want to look back. Remember Lot's wife. She looked back and became a pillar of salt. I want to keep my eyes forward, looking unto Jesus, the author and the finisher of my faith.

3:15-21

Our "vile" body is the one we're living in right now. It needs food, it needs water, it needs sleep, it needs clothes, it needs all kind of things. This vile body is just a temporary container for our spirit. However, the Lord will give us a new body one day. It is a glorious body. It is a resurrection body which will never die.

Our minds are focused on heaven and we look forward to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. If the Holy Spirit lives in you then you should be thinking about the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. I have no doubt the Holy Spirit is speaking to Christians today about the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul gave us a description of people who stood in contrast to the born again Christian. He said these people have another god and that god is their "belly". What did he mean by this? The word belly points to food, and food points to provision. This is a picture of a man whose mind is obsessed with his own provision. His thoughts are completely controlled by making money and living the good life right now. He is not thinking of heavenly things. His mind is fixed on earthly things.

Paul warned us of this kind of people because they are in the church. Some of them have big names and are famous and have mega churches. Paul warned us about these people. He said to "mark them". That means we need to know these impostors by name and avoid them. We need to tell other people to stay away from these wolves in sheep's clothing.

When Paul said be "followers together of me" this did not mean he wanted a personal following. Paul warned against following men in **1 Corinthians 1:12-13**. He warned us not to be followers of men. He did not change his mind when he told people to follow him. Instead, he told people to look at the example of his life. How did Paul live? We are to imitate that lifestyle of having our mind set on eternity. Our hearts are to be set on what is eternal, and not on what is temporary. (Compare this thought to **2 Corinthians 4:18**). Paul taught us to walk by faith, not by sight. The things that are "seen" are temporary. Our hearts and minds need to be fixed on what is eternal. This doctrine is completely opposite of what popular preachers in America teach.

Mark those false preachers. Do not listen to them or pay them any attention. As the scripture says, Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Amen. (**2 Corinthians 6:17**)

Rejoice – Philippians 4

4:1-3

The book of life is mentioned throughout the Bible. Another verse where we have the book of life is **Revelation 20:15**, "*And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.*"

I think if a man read something like this his first thought would be: "**How do I get my name in the book of life?**" That's the question I would ask. That is the question any sane person would be asking.

It is simple to be saved. **Romans 10:13** says, "*For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*" The gospel is straight forward and easy to understand. Christ died for our sins on the cross at Calvary, he was buried in a tomb, and he rose again three days later. He paid the price for our sins. Now if we believe in him and call on his name God will forgive our sins for the sake of his son Jesus Christ. Our names are written in the book of life when we put our faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ to save us.

Read **Ephesians 2:8-9**. God demonstrated his grace to us by allowing his son to take our place at Calvary. Because Jesus died, was buried, and rose again we know God accepted his sacrifice on our behalf. Now, we no longer have to go to hell when we die. Instead, we can be forgiven of our sins and have our name written down in the book of life.

Paul was promoting Christian unity. These sisters in the Lord had a disagreement. However, these were workers with Paul in the gospel and he cared about them. He wanted to see them agree together in the Lord. As Christians our agreement is always in the Lord. Outside of the Lord Jesus Christ there is no real basis for agreement. He is the way, the truth, and the life. (**John 14:6**)

How can two walk together except they agree? Their agreement is in the Lord. Once they turn away from their opinions and put emphasis on the Lord then relationships are restored. John put it this way in **1 John 1:7**, "*But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*"

4:4-7

I've mentioned this before but I don't think "rejoice" is the same thing as happiness. Happiness depends on circumstances. This "rejoice" Paul wrote about did not depend on external circumstances. It came from inside the believer. It came out of the spirit of the believer and could be relied on no matter how difficult circumstances might be. This rejoicing comes from a clean conscience and from the testimony of a man who knows he is obeying God's voice and doing what God wants him to do.

The Lord is near. He observes, sees, and hears. He speaks to us. Our relationships with people around us should reflect this knowledge. We should live in such a way that people will know we believe in the Lord Jesus. When people are around you they can feel the difference.

Another word for "moderation" is gentleness. Christians should be known for having a gentle and a kind demeanor. (**2 Timothy 2:24**). Our lives should attract people to the gospel of Jesus Christ and not

drive people away. The Lord is at hand means the Lord is near. It also means that the return of the Lord is near.

Christians need to overcome anxiety. We are instructed: "*do not be anxious about anything*". How do we overcome anxiety? The Lord wants us to pray about everything. Do not worry about anything but pray about everything. By training yourself to pray about what you would worry about you will learn the Lord can handle things that you cannot. Anxiety arises because there are so many things in life which are out of our control. However, we need to learn to be quiet in God's love and care. We need to remember the Lord sees, he hears, and will act on our behalf. Pray instead of worry. Pray instead of allowing yourself to be anxious. The Lord Jesus taught this in Matthew 6.

When we pray express thanksgiving to God. Thanksgiving drives out complaining and murmuring. Complaining and murmuring leads to sin. Discipline yourself to give thanks in everything. Giving thanks is God's will for the Christian. (**1 Thessalonians 5:18; Colossians 3:17; Ephesians 5:20**)

When we pray and petition God with thanksgiving we open our heart to receive peace which can only come from God. This peace from God will guard our heart and our mind and protect us from the attack of the enemy.

4:8-9

The word 'finally' shows Paul was wrapping up his thoughts. He exhorted them to focus their mind on what was true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and good report. He encouraged them to look for virtue, and things which were praiseworthy. We are instructed to "*think on these things*".

Christians need to learn their real work is believing God's word. In order to believe we must hear (or read), and remember. How can we remember if we do not think. We have to think and meditate, ponder and ruminate. The word must find a place in our mind so that after we close the book we remember what we read. How many times have we walked out of church and had no clue what the preacher said? That should give us an indication of how much we love the truth. How much do you love the truth? How much do you love God's word?

If you love the truth and you love God's word you will remember it. It will find a place in your heart. You will hear it, receive it, believe in it, and find yourself putting it into practice in your everyday life situations.

We must think about the truth and apply it just like the apostle applied the word to his life. He said they could look at his life and see an example of someone putting into practice the truth he preached to them.

The promise was that if we put God's word into practice then we would experience the blessing of God's peace on us. This was a promise for obedience. We will experience God's peace. The God of peace will be with us.

There is a lot around us that reeks of death, and sin, and corruption. It takes a concentrated effort to set our mind on things which are true, honest, lovely, good report, virtue, and praise. It will take effort. It will require sitting still with your Bible in your lap and thinking about the words written on the page. It

will require praying and asking God to show you how his word applies to your life. It will require a desire on your part to obey what you read and understand. God will help you if you step out in faith and obedience.

4:10-23

In this final section Paul rejoiced that the Philippians were helping him again with material support. He acknowledged that he knew they would have helped previously but were unable to do so. He also said that though they were now helping him he had learned to do without material support. He had learned to be content when he had little or when he had a lot.

Since they were supporting the gospel he was confident that God would supply all of their needs. This points back to what the Lord Jesus said in **Matthew 6:33**. Seek God's kingdom and his righteousness. All your needs will be taken care of. We serve the Lord and he promised to provide for us. This is an iron-clad promise in scripture that we need to be clear on. God is our provider. He will provide. He does provide. He will take care of us.

Make up your mind to obey God and seek his kingdom. Help others promote the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Mike Kines
May 13, 2021